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### **WHYY CELEBRATES A CENTURY WITH HOMETOWN LEGEND DR. RUTH PATRICK OF THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES**

PHILADELPHIA—WHYY celebrates the centennial of The Academy of Natural Sciences' Dr. Ruth Patrick with a special broadcast on WHYY TV12 of "Hometown Legends: Dr. Ruth Patrick" on Sunday, Nov. 25, at 6:30 p.m., the eve of her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

"Hometown Legends: Dr. Ruth Patrick," explores the life of this world-renowned scientist and pioneer in the study of freshwater ecosystems, who has spent her professional career at Philadelphia's Academy, the oldest natural history museum in the Americas. She still reports to her second floor office in the museum on most afternoons.

The program contains commentary, including her thoughts on encounters with sex discrimination, her forward-thinking father who prepared her all those years ago to enter the male-dominated field of science, and her groundbreaking work that changed the field of ecology and even played a role in winning World War II. It features vintage footage of Patrick during the course of her long career, as well as recent footage of the scientist at work at a local stream, and interviews with some of her colleagues at the Academy.

Born in Topeka, Kan., in 1907 and raised in Kansas City, Mo., Patrick's childhood was unconventional for a girl in the early 1900s. Her lawyer father had a love of science, which he passed on to his daughter. "I collected everything, worms and mushrooms and plants and rocks," states Patrick in the program. She explains that her mother was not always supportive of her interest in the natural world. "My mother had no tolerance of that at all because she felt girls should be in the home and not out in the fields." Ruth instead chose to follow the advice of her father. "He used to say to me, 'with your spare time read and improve your mind. You can hire people to wash dishes,'" Patrick said.

However, once she secured a position with The Academy of Natural Sciences, her peers did not provide her with the kind of encouragement given by her father. In the program, she tells the story of being chastised by a senior scientist for wearing lipstick. While it was acceptable for female volunteers at the Academy to wear lipstick, Patrick's colleague did not think she could be taken seriously if she wore it. "I think that reflected the attitude of men toward women more than anything else I could say to you," she said.

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Patrick did not let discrimination deter her and she remained focused on her work studying diatoms, single-celled algae that nourish organisms living in freshwater. During World War II, the U.S. captured a German submarine after the Germans had been successful at sinking several U.S. and English subs. The U.S. approached The Academy of Natural Sciences for help with a sample they had taken from the hull of the German sub. "I found that there was particularly one species [in the sample] that was only known from the north coast of Cuba and one of the islands in the West Indies," said Patrick. Because of her findings, the U.S. found a supply line of German submarines on the north coast of Cuba.

Patrick went on to have an illustrious career that included groundbreaking work in the area of water pollution. She determined that the health of the environment is determined by looking at the many species that inhabit it, a concept that had a tremendous impact on the field of ecology. "I have been credited by the National Academy [of Sciences] as being the first one that ever used the ecosystem approach for looking at problems of pollution," said Patrick.

She is considered an icon to many women who have followed her. "I think she was truly a visionary," states Dr. Sybil Seitzinger, director of the Rutgers Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences. "She started out as a woman scientist when there were very few, and she became a real leader."

Patrick has written many scholarly papers, numerous books and earned many prestigious honors and awards, including the National Medal of Science from President Bill Clinton. The University of South Carolina named its science and math education center after her.

Well beyond the typical age of retirement, Patrick, who turns 100 on Nov. 26, continues to report to work at The Academy of Natural Sciences. "I don't think I'll ever retire. I will always keep up my interest in the natural world," she said.

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*The Academy is located at 1900 Benjamin Franklin Parkway and is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and weekends until 5 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for children ages 3 --12, seniors, college students with I.D. and military personnel, and free for children under 3. There is an additional \$2 fee for "Butterflies!"*

*The Academy of Natural Sciences, the oldest natural science research museum In the Americas, is a world leader in biodiversity and environmental research. The mission of the Academy is the encouragement and cultivation of the sciences.*